

Message Text

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P R 252141Z MAR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DOUALA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

INFO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA

SUBJECT: MUHAMMAD ALI TOUR

1. NEWS ITEM IN MARCH 25 WASHINGTON POST REPORTS THAT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION, GEORGE FOREMAN, WILL DEFEND HIS TITLE AGAINST MUHAMMAD ALI IN KINSHASA IN SEPTEMBER, IF FOREMAN WINS MARCH 26 BOUT IN CARACAS WITH KEN NORTON. IF NORTON WINS HE WILL BE MADE A SIMILAR OFFER. CONTRACTS FOR THE DOLS TEN MILLION KINSHASA FIGHT HAVE REPORTEDLY ALREADY BEEN SIGNED.

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2. IN CONNECTION WITH THIS TITLE MATCH, THADDEUS ARNOLD,

PRESIDENT OF VERDAD, INC., WASHINGTON-BASED TRADE PROMOTION COMPANY, AND ASSOCIATES MET TODAY WITH DEPT OFFICERS TO DISCUSS VERDAD'S SIGNED OFFER WITH ROBERT ARUM, OF ARUM, FRIEDMAN, KATZ OF NEW YORK, LEGAL COUNSEL FOR MUHAMMAD ALI, FOR A SERIES OF FIVE EXHIBITION MATCHES IN AFRICA THIS SUMMER OVER A PERIOD OF 20 DAYS UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF VERDAD, INC.

3. ARNOLD GROUP PLANS TO FILM ALI'S AFRICAN EXHIBITION TOUR FOR WORLD-WIDE DISTRIBUTION. EBONY MAGAZINE IS SCHEDULED TO BE INCLUDED FOR MEDIA COVERAGE. ALI WILL TRAVEL WITH A PARTY OF TEN COMPRISED MAINLY OF HIS TRAINERS AND SPARRING PARTNERS.

4. ADDRESSEE POSTS HAVE BEEN SELECTED BY THE GROUP FOR THE EXHIBITION MATCHES. FOR PERSONAL REASONS ARNOLD WILL LAUNCH TOUR IN LIBREVILLE. GROUP PLANS TO DEPART SHORTLY FOR AFRICA TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS AND WORK OUT FINANCIAL AGREEMENT ON AN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY BASIS. POSTS WILL BE ADVISED OF ARNOLD GROUP SCHEDULE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. ARNOLD GROUP PLANS TO MEET WITH EMBASSY/USIS OFFICERS TO OBTAIN ASSISTANCE (1) IN FINDING LOCAL LAWYER WHO WILL REPRESENT VERDAD, INC.; (2) IN MAKING CONTACT WITH APPROPRIATE LEVEL OFFICIALS AT EITHER MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS, CULTURE AND/OR INFORMATION; (3) IN MAKING SUGGESTIONS AS TO SITE FOR EXHIBITION WHICH WILL ALLOW FOR MAXIMUM ATTENDANCE OF NATIVE POPULATION. BEGIN FYI: KINSHASA FIGHT SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN OUTDOOR SOCCER STADIUM END FYI.

6. DEPT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSIES REACTION TO THE PROPOSED VISIT AND WHAT, IF ANY, SPECIAL PROBLEMS SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED. RUSH

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